

Illinois Early Learning Council

Committee Reports and Work Plans

- Program Quality and Quality Assurance
 - Workforce Development
 - Linkage and Integration
 - Expansion
 - Evaluation and Assessment

October 3, 2005

Program Quality & Quality Assurance Committee SUMMARY

The Illinois Early Learning Council has charged the Program Quality and Quality Assurance Committee with three main tasks:

- Enhancing the quality of existing early childhood programs for children birth to five years of age;
- Ensuring that high-quality services are provided in all publicly-funded early learning programs; and
- Designing a high-quality, voluntary, universal preschool model for all three- and four- year olds in Illinois.

Since it began its work, the Quality Committee has accomplished the following tasks:

- Identified research-based preschool program models for all three- and four-year-olds;
- Identified research-based program models for children birth to three years of age who are at risk of school failure;
- Created detailed program quality recommendations for inclusion in the Council's Preschool For All report. These recommendations, for children birth to three and three to five, can be reviewed in the Quality Committee section of the document, "Preschool For All – Summary of Final Recommendations;"
- Researched current early childhood education program model standards and analyzed gaps between current program standards and proposed Preschool For All program quality standards; and
- Reviewed the recommendations for tiered reimbursement and recognition.

The Committee plans to continue working toward its goal of enhancing the quality of all birth-to-five early learning programs throughout the state. The current work plan outlines action steps to meet this goal over the next twelve months. The Committee will continue its efforts to: 1) identify models for the inclusion of licensed family child care providers in Preschool For All and 2) provide training and technical assistance to programs currently serving young children to assist them in meeting Preschool For All program quality standards.

Over the next twelve months, the Committee will:

- Identify and develop resource materials to assist 0-3 programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant to implement research-based models that offer intensive, comprehensive services to infants and toddlers who are at risk of school failure and their families, as well as develop recommendations for more integrated 0-3 program monitoring, training and technical assistance.
- Assist providers in understanding similarities between program standards across early childhood programs serving children ages 3-5.
- Develop an online tool to gather information about the readiness of child care programs in relation to Preschool For All program quality standards.

- Create and distribute documents for providers that summarize best practices in early childhood care and education.
- Discuss the contents of training sessions about Preschool For All and Tiered Reimbursement requirements in conjunction with entities that currently provide training to early childhood professionals.
- Work in conjunction with the Early Childhood Committee of the Children's Mental Health Task Force to review the recommendations in their strategic plan, and make recommendations to the full Council for support or action.

PROGRAM QUALITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

GOALS:

- Enhance the quality of existing early childhood programs for children birth to five years of age.
- Ensure that high-quality services are provided in all publicly-funded early learning programs.

BIRTH TO THREE OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify and develop written guidance and resource materials to assist infant toddler programs funded through the Early Childhood Block Grant to implement research-based models that offer intensive, comprehensive services to infants and toddlers who are at risk of school failure and their families.

- a. Evidence-based program models include: Baby TALK; Early Head Start; Healthy Families; and Parents As Teachers. Enhanced services could include doula services and/or intensive mental health services.
 - 1. Workgroup will identify existing documents that can be combined and modified to create resource materials and guidance for programs interested in moving to a research-based model.
 - 2. Workgroup will develop a plan for dissemination of materials to programs around the state.

2. Develop recommendations for more integrated 0-3 program monitoring, training and technical assistance.

NOTE: The Birth to Five Project's Government Interagency Team will have an initial discussion of program monitoring across birth to three programs.

- a. Review current program-related technical assistance and program monitoring practices across recommended 0-3 models.
- b. Develop recommendations regarding a system for meeting training, technical assistance, and monitoring needs of different 0-3 program models. (mid-term)

THREE TO FIVE OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify program models for Preschool For All for all three- and four-year olds.

- a. Research and recommend preschool program models that are appropriate for children in licensed family child care homes. (summer 2005)
- b. Convene focus groups of licensed family child care providers to explore options for involving children in Preschool For All. (**completed**)

- c. Develop a family child care focus group tool kit and disseminate to interested individuals and organizations to collect additional information from family child care providers about Preschool For All. **(completed)**
- d. Convene a time-limited work group of the Quality Committee to review findings from the family child care focus groups. **(completed)**
- e. Make recommendations and discuss with the full Committee. (August 2005)
- f. Take recommendations to the full Early Learning Council. (October 2005)
- g. Complete follow-up steps. (October 2005 – ongoing)

2. Develop recommendations for more integrated 3-5 program quality assurance systems, including monitoring, technical assistance, and training.

- a. Create document that will help providers to understand similarities across Early Childhood program standards. (short-term)
- b. Identify current program monitoring tools and practices in PreK, Head Start, and Child Care programs.
 - i. Add proposed Preschool For All standards to the 2004 EC Programs Expanded Matrix created by the State Head Start Collaboration Office matrix. (short-term)
 - ii. If necessary, develop a new matrix to illustrate areas of monitoring overlap among programs. Include proposed PFA standards. (short-term)
- c. Review current program-related technical assistance and program monitoring practices across IL Early Childhood Education programs and recommend necessary changes. (mid-term)
- d. When PFA program standards are developed, create a program monitoring tool reflective of PFA's quality indicators so as to assist individual programs in identifying areas of improvement and needed training for program quality assurance. Work in conjunction with the Evaluation and Assessment Committee. (long-term)
- e. Develop recommendations for how monitoring and quality assurance functions could be effectively implemented, including ways that systematic monitoring could reduce duplicative monitoring reports and visits. (long-term)

3. Provide training and technical assistance to programs currently serving young children to assist in readying them to meet program standards that will be required for PFA participation.

- a. Create simple online instrument (i.e. checklist) for providers to assess the quality level of their program relative to Preschool For All quality standards, and to collect baseline program data (e.g. name of curriculum used). (short-term)
- b. Compile and analyze data received from providers, and use it to further refine TA needed to plan for and achieve PFA standards. (mid-term)

- c. Create information for program administrators and staff to assist them with integrating into their programs those components most critical to high-quality early childhood services. (mid-term)
 - i. Create and provide a tool comparing different research-based curriculum models that will assist directors in determining which curricula best meet the needs of the children and families they serve.
 - ii. Create documents summarizing current best practices in parent involvement, transition, and other topics identified by programs.
 - iii. Work with entities currently providing training to EC professionals to integrate sessions into their training calendars that would help providers ready themselves for PFA and for Tiered Reimbursement requirements (e.g. choosing curriculum, best practices in parent involvement).

4. Develop incentives to enhance the quality of child care and other birth-to-five programs.

- a. Review tiered reimbursement and recognition recommendations. (**completed**)
- b. Develop implementation (phase-in) of incentive programs in lowest-quality care. (**outstanding - related to implementation of tiered reimbursement proposal**)
- c. Recommend to the Early Learning Council that the tiered reimbursement plan be circulated to familiarize programs and providers with tiered reimbursement standards. (short-term)

5. Ensure that written program standards exist.

- a. Develop written Preschool For All program standards and incorporate standards into Requests For Proposals and monitoring instruments. (**tabled - dependent on PFA implementation**)
- b. Develop recommendations for the use and monitoring of ISBE 0-3 program standards across 0-3 ECBG programs that serve at-risk children. (long-term) **WINTER 2006**
- c. Develop recommendations for the implementation and use of program standards across 3-5 programs. (long-term) **WINTER 2006**

6. Review Quality Committee's Preschool For All recommendations to identify recommendations that could possibly be implemented without new funds or a formal Preschool For All program. COMPLETED AT JULY 2005 MEETING

7. In conjunction with the Early Childhood Committee of the Children's Mental Health Task Force, review recommendations contained in their Strategic Plan and determine how the Early Learning Council might assist in moving these recommendations forward.

- a. Review the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership Strategic Plan and recommend components that this committee can bring to the full Early Learning Council for possible action/support/assistance. (short-term)

Workforce Development Committee SUMMARY

The goal of the Workforce Development Committee is to ensure that a sufficient number of diverse, well-qualified early childhood professionals are available to provide high-quality early childhood services statewide.

Since beginning its work, the Workforce Development Committee has accomplished the following results:

- Developed strategies to reduce articulation barriers, including supporting the development of the Associate of Arts in Early Childhood Education degree (AAT-ECE) which will offer a fully transferable degree from 2-year to 4-year higher education institutions for those students pursuing early childhood education teacher certification.
- Created comprehensive recommendations regarding personnel qualifications, workforce supports, and cost estimates for the Council's Preschool For All plan, which are included in the Council's report to the Governor and General Assembly.
- Worked with stakeholders to create strategies for overcoming barriers to student teaching that prevent working practitioners from earning Type 04 certification.
- Supported the work of the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC) to launch Gateways to Opportunity, the Illinois Early Care and Education Professional Development Network.

Over the next twelve months the Workforce Development Committee will work on:

- Expanding the capacity of the higher education system to ensure that early childhood professionals have opportunities to earn early childhood degrees and credentials;
- Increasing access to scholarships and financial aid for early childhood professionals and students;
- Supporting the work of the Professional Development Advisory Committee to establish an integrated statewide early childhood professional development system;
- Identifying strategies for recruiting and training bilingual and bicultural practitioners, and for increasing the competency of practitioners in all early childhood programs to meet the needs of children and families from diverse cultures; and
- Developing mentoring models for supporting new early childhood teachers to ensure success in the classroom, improve retention and maintain high-quality programming.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

GOAL:

- Ensure an adequate and stable supply of highly qualified and diverse early childhood professionals to provide high-quality early childhood services.

BACKGROUND: The objectives and action steps below represent committee priorities for FY06 (July, 2005-June 30, 2006). The objectives are designed to further the committee's recommendations on workforce supports necessary to implement the Council's Preschool For All initiative and to take advantage of current workforce development efforts and opportunities in order to build a well-qualified workforce over the long-term.

OBJECTIVES: (listed in priority order)

1. Ensure more early childhood professionals have opportunities to receive early childhood degrees and credentials by building the capacity of the higher education system.

- a. Monitor the progress of the Associate of Arts in Teaching degree in Early Childhood Education (AAT-ECE) proposed by the AAT-ECE work group convened by the Illinois P-16 Initiative, which was developed to reduce articulation barriers.

ACTION STEPS

- i. Meet with IL Community College Board's (ICCB) President/Chief Executive Officer and other key administrators to establish relationships, provide updates, and discuss key early childhood higher education priorities.
 - ii. Ask the AAT-ECE work group to keep the Workforce Development Committee informed regarding the types of supports needed to successfully implement the AAT-ECE.
 - iii. Engage in marketing strategies to encourage higher education institutions to adopt the AAT-ECE.
- b. Develop and implement strategies that have impacts on statewide policy and individual higher education institutions to overcome barriers to student teaching that prevent working students from obtaining Type 04 teaching certification. Explore options, including:
 - 1. Models for substitute pools, stipends/loans to cover substitute salaries while teachers are student teaching outside of their classrooms;
 - 2. Facilitating student teaching in community-based program workplaces;
 - 3. Teacher exchanges;
 - 4. Developing new student placements in community-based settings;
 - 5. Policy solutions.
- c. Develop more programs, as well as flexible coursework options, for cohorts of early childhood professionals to obtain credentials and degrees.
 - 1. Establish alternative certification and master's-level teacher preparation programs.
 - 2. Offer new management and leadership courses for early childhood program directors.

3. Increase the availability of night and weekend courses and distance learning courses.
4. Add to the size of early childhood faculty in higher ed institutions to expand course offerings to more students.

ACTION STEPS

- i. Reach out to Deans of Education Associations to develop strategies for overcoming barriers to student teaching that prevent working students from obtaining Type 04 teaching certification and for expanding teacher preparation program options.
- ii. Continue to explore feasibility of Alternative Certification and Master's in Teaching (MAT) programs.
- iii. Develop an issue paper that addresses the following areas:
 1. The changing nature of early childhood education service delivery (significant PreK expansion in community-based settings);
 2. Significant impediments to obtaining Type 04 certification (for different target populations, e.g. individuals with BA's, with AA/AAS degrees, PreK Assistants in public schools, etc.);
 3. Current rules and statute requirements related to problem areas (e.g. student teaching, NCATE/NAEYC standards);
 4. Options/strategies for overcoming the impediments.
- iv. Use the paper to organize dialogues about which strategies to pursue. Begin with AAT-ECE work group to generate ideas and provide feedback.
- v. Develop paper describing substitute pool models.

2. Support the work of PDAC to implement the Gateways to Opportunity integrated professional development support system, including:

- a. A credentialing entity to award credentials based on a career lattice to recognize educational achievements;
- b. A network of career advisors;
- c. A registry to track training and education attained;
- d. A searchable website of information on early childhood careers and professional development opportunities.

3. Increase access to scholarships, financial aid, and other supports for early childhood professionals and students

ACTION STEPS

1. Review policies governing the TEACH Early Childhood Scholarship program and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission's (ISAC) teacher scholarship programs.
2. Develop an issue paper that contains a service gap and issue analysis to determine whether policy revisions are necessary. Review policy changes, such as:
 - i. Expand TEACH eligibility to cover existing certification coursework;
 - ii. Expand TEACH eligibility to cover coursework for administrators taking master's level courses to attain the Illinois Director Credential, Level II and III;

- iii. Allow teachers receiving ISAC scholarships to meet teaching requirements by working in community-based centers listed in the DCFS licensing database;
 - iv. Explore creation of an early childhood set-aside in ISAC's teacher scholarship programs to ensure that a minimum number of scholarships are awarded to early childhood teachers;
 - v. Explore loan relief for scholarship recipients working in child care centers after graduation .
3. Develop funding priorities that support early childhood practitioners to pursue greater levels of education and training and to remain in the early childhood field (e.g. Great START).

4. Expand the numbers of well-trained bilingual early childhood professionals to ensure that children and families have access to a qualified, diverse, and stable early childhood workforce.

ACTION STEPS

- 1. Assess the needs of the field in terms of culture, language, skills, gender, geography, demographics, and population served.
- 2. Convene a Bicultural/Bilingual Advisory Workgroup (in conjunction with the Birth to Five project /Build Initiative).
- 3. Research gaps and barriers related to recruiting and training bilingual practitioners to assist them in obtaining credentials and degrees, including gathering existing information on barriers to recruiting, training, and retaining qualified bilingual staff.
- 4. Identify strategies that assist practitioners in all early childhood programs to increase competency in addressing multicultural diversity and to use best practices when working with children and adults for whom English is a second or emerging language.

5. Offer supports for new teachers.

- a. Begin to develop mentoring models to support new early childhood teachers in order to ensure their success in the classroom, improve retention, and maintain high quality programming by continuing to improve upon the skills they learned in their teacher preparation program. (The cost of the three-year program recommended in the Preschool For All recommendations, which includes ongoing assessment of teacher skills and reduced class time or release-time provisions for new teachers and mentors, is estimated to be \$2,545 per new teacher per year.)

ACTION STEPS

- 1. Explore adding early education components to Mentoring & Induction programs already operating in large unit school systems.
- 2. Explore adding preschool component to Joyce Foundation's funding of K-12 Mentoring & Induction programming.
- 3. Investigate mentoring models, e.g. National Louis "Coaching for Success," Peoria Professional Development Academy, and Head Start new staff mentoring and supports.

Linkage and Integration Committee SUMMARY

The Early Learning Council has charged the Linkage and Integration Committee with the following tasks intended to improve the coordination and integration of services in early childhood programs that support children's healthy development and school readiness:

- Align program requirements such as determining eligibility and parent fees across early childhood programs.
- Develop strategies for linking children in license-exempt homes to early education programs.
- Improve transitions for children moving from Birth-to-Three to Three-to-Five to Elementary school programs.
- Link early education programs to other services to meet the comprehensive need of children from Birth to Five and their families.
- Support community collaborations that bring together stakeholders to plan and coordinated services for young children and their families.

To date, the Linkage and Integration Committee has accomplished the following tasks:

- Created detailed recommendations for inclusion in the Council's Preschool For All report in the following areas:
 - linking children in license-exempt home child care to early education programs;
 - strategies to engage license-exempt home child care providers in opportunities designed to enhance the early learning experiences of the children in their care;
 - health components to be monitored by Preschool For All programs; and
 - strategies to improve community collaboration and information sharing.
- In conjunction with the Child Care and Development Advisory Council, recommended that IDHS develop a pilot program to give parents with full-time child care needs the option of selecting care during traditional business hours, rather than requiring that hours of care relate directly to work hours. IDHS is currently working to develop this Full-Time Only pilot.
- Recommended that work be undertaken to reduce duplicative program site visits through coordinated or integrated program monitoring. Initial efforts are underway by the 0-3 workgroup of the Quality Committee to identify these opportunities in Birth to Three programs.
- Recommended that further training be provided on program models for blending funding, as well as best practices in community collaboration. A number of training activities have taken place and others are scheduled. A collaborations website is being developed by the IDHS Child Care & Development Advisory Council.
- Recommended that improved access to information on current services and service gaps is needed and that both programs and the state should use this information in planning and funding

decisions. Chicago Metropolis 2020 and the U of I at Urbana-Champaign have developed a planning grant proposal to garner the resources necessary to support a planning process and the initial development of a data framework and website - the IL. Early Childhood Asset Map.

Over the next twelve months, the Committee will:

- Explore issues related to eligibility and monitor the Full-Time Only Pilot. Particular attention will be paid to exploring eligibility barriers experienced by families due to their immigration status.
- Continue to explore other issues related to streamlining administration of programs that blend funding streams, including identifying opportunities for coordinated or integrated program monitoring in 3-5 programs.
- Develop recommendations and disseminate best practice information on transitions for all children, from home to programs, from Birth to Three programs to 3-5 programs and from 3-5 programs to school.
- Work to identify and expand current outreach efforts to connect children cared for in license-exempt homes and their caregivers to preschool programs and to identify and disseminate best practices for outreach and enhancing service quality.
- Work in coordination with the Interagency Nutrition Council and other entities to link children, families, and early childhood program providers to other systems such as nutrition, physical activity, and health care providers.
- Monitor progress on the web-based database and mapping system.
- Work in conjunction with IDHS Child Care & Development Advisory Council committees on a number of issues of shared interest, including program administration and accountability, engaging license-exempt caregivers in learning opportunities, and community and program collaboration and integration.

LINKAGE AND INTEGRATION COMMITTEEWORk PLAN

GOAL:

- Improve coordination and integration across early childhood programs and systems to address the comprehensive nature of children's healthy development and readiness for school.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Align program requirements across early childhood programs.

- a. Explore issues related to **parent fees** across early learning programs. (Mid-term)
- b. Simplify access to early childhood programs by aligning comparable requirements related to **eligibility**. (Short-term)
 - 1. Explore eligibility issues related to immigration status.
 - 2. Consider recommendations in this area that may be generated by the IDHS Child Care & Development Advisory Council's Program Administration and Accessibility Committee.
 - 3. Monitor IDHS Full-Time Only pilot.
- c. Explore ways to streamline administration of programs that **blend funding streams**.
 - 1. Monitor IDHS plans for grant-funding pilot with selected site-administered programs. (Short-term)
 - 2. Per Council-approved recommendation, explore opportunities to reduce duplicative program and fiscal monitoring and auditing site visits and paperwork in programs for three to five year-olds. (Mid-term)
 - 3. Explore possible strategies, including technology, to simplify eligibility process for programs. (Mid-term)
 - 4. Continue to work in conjunction with the IDHS Child Care & Development Advisory Council's Collaboration & Integration Committee on strategies that assist providers to blend funding from a variety of sources to support high-quality programming and expand access to families. (Short-term)

2. Link children in license-exempt child care homes to early education programs and develop strategies to enhance the early learning of children cared for in license-exempt homes.

- a. Increase the number of children in license-exempt care who also participate in Head Start and/or PreK programs. (Short to mid-term)
 - 1. Identify and expand existing outreach efforts, such as through Child Care Resource & Referral Quality Counts vans and All Our Kids (AOK) networks.
 - 2. Research, document and disseminate best practice models for connecting programs with children in license-exempt homes.
 - i. Encourage information sharing between IDHS and ISBE to identify communities with high percentages of children in license-exempt care.

- ii. Explore possible incentives to programs who conduct more extensive recruiting efforts and outreach to license-exempt home providers and the parents who use these settings.
 - iii. Explore the possibility of creating small set-aside to fund pilot outreach initiatives.
- b. Support the efforts of the IDHS Child Care and Development Advisory Council to develop models and strategies for engaging license-exempt providers in activities that enhance early learning opportunities and identify effective service delivery models to direct resources and supports to them to enhance early learning. (0-3 and 3-5) (Short to mid-term)

3. Improve transitions from 0-3 to 3-5 programs and from 3-5 programs to school.

- a. Identify and assess the main early childhood transitions issues/barriers, i.e. the scope of problem currently. (In process)
- b. Develop recommendations to address barriers based on the scope and locations of transition problems. (In process)

4. Link early learning programs to other early childhood providers, programs and services to meet comprehensive needs of children 0-5 and their families – primary health care, Early Intervention (Part C), public benefits/social services.

- a. Ensure that early learning programs/providers have a **mechanism in place and clear protocol for identifying and referring** children and families to the appropriate program or system when further assessment, treatment or social services are needed.
 - 1. Monitor and support other efforts, e.g. ABCD, AOK Networks. (Short to mid-term)
- b. **Educate other providers** working with young children about early learning programs. (Mid to long-term)
- c. Using expertise of early education providers, **educate stakeholders from other related systems such as health and social services** on the experiences of children and families with these other systems. (Mid to long-term)
- d. Collaborate with Interagency Nutrition Council on issues related to nutrition. (Short to mid-term)

5. Foster and support local community collaborations that bring together stakeholders to plan and coordinate services for young children and families, and link local efforts to the state level.

- a. Consider recommendations that may be generated by the IDHS Child Care & Development Advisory Council's Collaboration & Integration Committee that identify lessons learned and ways to disseminate best practice models for community collaboration . (Short to mid-term)
- b. Monitor and receive updates on the progress of the web-based 0-5 data mapping system. (Short to mid-term)

Expansion Committee SUMMARY

The Illinois Early Learning Council has charged the Expansion Committee with two main tasks:

- Expanding access to high-quality preschool for all three- and four-year-olds by building upon and enhancing existing programs, beginning with those children most at risk for school failure, and
- Expanding access to high-quality early childhood programs for all at-risk children under three years of age.

To date, the Expansion Committee has accomplished the following results:

- Created detailed recommendations that have been included in the Council's Preschool For All report in the following areas:
 - Entities eligible to provide Preschool For All services;
 - Family access to Preschool For All programs for 3- and 4-year olds and for infants, toddlers, and their families;
 - Plan for phasing in universal access, including serving 3- & 4-year-olds at highest risk of school failure first.
- Developed cost methodologies and detailed cost estimates of the Council's Preschool For All recommendations, including integrating critical infrastructure costs into the overall budget of the proposed initiative.
- Worked on developing an inventory of existing early learning programs in Illinois, which will be completed by the University of Illinois and other stakeholders under the Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map project.

Over the next twelve months, the Committee will:

- Convene a Transportation Workgroup to address the issue of access to transportation so that young children and their families can participate in high-quality early childhood programs. The Workgroup will:
 - Research current transportation policies, supports and how transportation is handled in a variety of programs (e.g. Head Start, State Prekindergarten, school districts);
 - Identify the challenges families and programs experience in arranging and funding transportation; and
 - Develop potential short- and longer-term transportation strategies that could make programs accessible to more children and families.

EXPANSION COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

GOALS:

- Expand access to high-quality preschool for all three- and four-year-olds by building upon and enhancing existing programs, beginning with those children most at-risk for school failure.
- Expand access to high-quality early childhood programs for all at-risk children under three years of age.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Complete an inventory of existing early learning programs in Illinois and develop a process for ongoing assessment of needs:

- a. Project future utilization of universal program, based on examination of current market for early learning services, parent preferences, characteristics of current and projected 0-5 population, and take-up rates in other states. COMPLETE

Items below to be led by the University of Illinois and Chicago Metropolis 2020:

- b. Conduct inventory of existing 0-5 quality early learning programs to determine availability of quality early learning programs in Illinois. (mid-term)
- c. Develop process for ongoing assessment of needs. (mid-term)
- d. Establish process for basing future resource allocation on existing supply and unmet needs. (mid-term)

0-3 Expansion Committee Workgroup (short-term): GENERALLY COMPLETE

- 1. Determine the number of pregnant women and families with children birth to three in IL who could benefit from a prevention program based on the definition of at-risk adopted by the ELC on July 19 (families at or below 50% of SMI) COMPLETE
- 2. Determine: MOSTLY COMPLETE
 - i. Level/intensity of prevention services based on different categories or level of risk.
 - ii. Total number of children in each category
 - iii. Take-up rate of children in each category
 - iv. The cost of providing a prevention program for each category or level of risk
- 3. Based on the above, determine total cost of providing prevention services to all eligible children and families (those not currently served by existing programs) COMPLETE
- 4. Develop a methodology to build on existing programs to eventually serve all eligible families who might choose services, as well as a plan to phase-in services to eligible families
- 5. Recommend a phase-in plan for birth-to-three-year-olds HOLD FOR PRESCHOOL FOR ALL IMPLEMENTATION

2. Develop a plan to serve all at-risk 3- and 4-year-olds in high-quality early learning programs.

- a. Maintain and increase current funding streams. (short-term) COMPLETE
- b. Set priorities for immediate expansion of early learning programs, e.g. allocation of new Early Childhood Block Grant funding should prioritize expansion of 0-5 services in communities with unserved at-risk population; improve outreach, information sharing between programs, dissemination of best practices, and transparency. (short-term) RECOMMENDATION APPROVED BY THE EL COUNCIL AT APRIL 2005 MTG.
- c. Recommend options for phasing-in a plan for universal preschool, focusing first on meeting needs of at-risk families and taking into account questions of capacity and infrastructure; consider criteria based on a spectrum of risk. (short-term) COMPLETE

3. Develop and implement a plan to provide universal, voluntary access to high-quality preschool for all 3- and 4-year-olds, in a variety of settings.

- a. Revisit recommendations issued by previous planning efforts and identify recommendations that should be moved forward, including “Ready, Set, Grow” and Kagan-Brandon project. (short-term) COMPLETE
- b. Study other states’ universal preschool policies, including funding levels, phase-in plans, lessons learned, etc. (short-term) COMPLETE
- c. Develop recommendations for a transparent process/program design for universal preschool, to build on existing system by integrating with a variety of existing programs and funding streams. (mid-term) COMPLETE
- d. Determine whether there should be a set-aside for community-based organizations. (short-term) COMPLETE
- e. Convene time-limited governance work group to develop governance and planning structure options. (short-term)
- f. Implement necessary regulatory changes. (long-term) HOLD FOR PRESCHOOL FOR ALL IMPLEMENTATION
- g. Establish a statewide public awareness campaign targeting parents and eligible programs. (long-term) HOLD FOR PRESCHOOL FOR ALL IMPLEMENTATION

4. Develop and implement a plan to serve all at-risk children ages 0-3 in high-quality early learning programs, as a component of universal plan.

- a. Determine an appropriate monetary set-aside for at-risk children from birth to three, based on the percentage of children needing services, what services would be provided, and the cost of reaching this population with those services. (short-term) COMPLETE

- b. Determine appropriate integration with other departments and funding streams, including home visiting, Early Intervention, and other services addressing the needs of the 0-3 population. Consider CPS model of partnership for 0-3 programs (mid-term). HOLD FOR PFA IMPLEMENTATION

5. Integrate infrastructure costs with program costs.

- a. Utilize appropriate recommendations from Ready, Set, Grow & Universal Financing (Kagan-Brandon) project. (short to mid-term) COMPLETE
- b. Cost out and include in overall cost estimates the infrastructure costs for a universal system, including monitoring, transportation, community planning, evaluation. COMPLETE
- c. Convene a time-limited facilities workgroup to address needed facilities recommendations. (short-term) INCOMPLETE
- d. Convene a time-limited transportation work group to address needed transportation recommendations. (short-term) BEGIN FALL 2005

6. Develop and implement a financing policy to support a high-quality, comprehensive, accessible 0-5 early learning system.

- a. Determine the cost of financing Preschool For All. (short to mid-term) COMPLETE
- b. Discuss and make recommendations on policy questions of preventing supplantation of existing funding for early learning programs, and sliding family fees for a universal program. (short-term) COMPLETE
- c. Research and recommend method of fund distribution. (mid to long-term) COMPLETE

Evaluation & Assessment Committee SUMMARY

The Early Learning Council has charged the Evaluation and Assessment Committee with developing child assessment and program evaluation systems that support both individual children's learning and development and programs' continuous improvement.

- Develop guidelines for developmental screening and ongoing assessment of individual children in early learning programs to facilitate appropriate instruction and document children's progress.
- Develop guidelines for using child and program data for self-assessment of program effectiveness to inform continuous improvement efforts in early learning programs.
- Develop an evaluation plan for early learning programs funded by education dollars (i.e., educationally-focused programs for children ages birth to five that are funded by state-controlled funding streams).
- Explore capacity to share service delivery and child outcome data across programs and service systems (e.g. health, child welfare, child care, Early Intervention, education, etc.) for evaluation and program planning purposes.

Since beginning its work, the Evaluation and Assessment Committee has accomplished the following tasks:

- Reviewed existing program requirements in Head Start and State Prekindergarten around developmental screening and ongoing assessment;
- Developed guidelines for developmental screening and ongoing assessment for Preschool For All programs;
- Developed preliminary outline of evaluation plan for universal preschool, including cost estimates;
- Developed preliminary outline of "best practices" for using child outcomes data in continuous program improvement.

Over the next twelve months the Evaluation and Assessment Committee will:

- Develop a more detailed plan for the evaluation of the Preschool For All system (this will begin once the Preschool For All program is authorized);
- Develop plan for monitoring trends in children's school readiness (also must be part of Preschool For All system).

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

GOAL:

- Develop child assessment and program evaluation systems that support both individual children's learning and development and programs' continuous improvement.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1. Develop guidelines for developmental screening and ongoing assessment of individual children in early learning programs to facilitate appropriate instruction and document children's progress. COMPLETE**
 - a. Review Illinois' and other states' existing requirements for child assessment in early learning programs (short term)
 - b. Develop child screening and assessment framework for universal preschool program, including infrastructure & cost implications (short to mid term)
- 2. Develop guidelines for using child and program data for self-assessment of program effectiveness to inform continuous improvement efforts in early learning programs.**
 - a. Review Illinois' and other states' existing requirements for child assessment in early learning programs (short term) COMPLETE
 - b. Develop "best practice" guidelines for using child outcome data as part of a comprehensive program self-assessment (mid term) PARTIALLY COMPLETE
 - c. Develop a more detailed plan for the evaluation of the Preschool For All system (BEGIN ONCE PRESCHOOL FOR ALL IS AUTHORIZED)
- 3. Develop an evaluation plan for early learning programs funded by education dollars (i.e., educationally-focused programs for children ages birth to five that are funded by state-controlled funding streams).**
 - a. Develop preliminary outline of evaluation plan for universal preschool, including cost estimates (short to mid term) COMPLETE
 - b. Develop plan for monitoring trends in children's school readiness (long term) PART OF PFA EVALUATION